ASIAN AND MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES TRIPOS Part IA

Middle Eastern Studies

Monday 31 May 2010  13.30 – 16.30

MES.6 INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY AND CULTURE OF THE MIDDLE EAST

Answer three questions. All questions carry equal marks.

STATIONERY REQUIREMENTS
8 page Answer Book x 3
A Rough Work Pad

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS
None

You may not start to read the questions printed on the subsequent pages of this question paper until instructed that you may do so by the Invigilator.
1. **Either** Why are there both positive and negative evaluations of the monarchy in the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible?

   **Or** What were the main concerns of the writers of the 'historical books' of the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible?

2. Discuss the Sassanian imperial policies towards state religions and religious minorities within the empire.

3. What are the main reasons given by scholars for the success of the Arabs in forming a huge empire under the banner of Islam?

4. How important was the legacy of the Persian empire in shaping the political culture of the 'Abbasid caliphate?'

5. 'Contrary to common belief, the Middle East is the centre of the medieval Jewish world.' Discuss.

6. Why were Middle Easterners so unprepared for the Crusader onslaught in the late eleventh century and when did they begin to fight back effectively?

7. How were the Safavids able to establish such a durable empire in Iran?

8. What factors contributed to the successful emergence of the Ottoman state in the fourteenth century?

END OF PAPER